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COUNTRY. Austria/USSR

SUBJECT USIA Retail Sales Outlets

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

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1. USIA Headquarters has just commissioned the Central Commercial Bureau to draw up plans for the establishment of about 200 retail sales stores throughout the Soviet Zone of Austria. An estimated 100 of these shops will deal in foodstuffs imported from the satellite countries; the remainder will serve as outlets for USIA products particularly textiles, shoes, metalware, and household goods.
2. USIA officials expect these stores will follow the pattern set by established USIA retail outlets which during recent months have been underselling Austrian retailers, and that they will be able to force Austrian shopkeepers into bankruptcy, upset prevailing food prices, and thereby seriously impair the Austrian economy. In this connection it is reported that a USIA official, one Ardeyev, recently reminded employees of the Central Commercial Bureau that Lower Austria is now regarded as an integral part of the Eastern bloc and that it is bound to the satellite economy.

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